

STEVEN HENSEL REVISITED WHAT COULD BE CONSIDERED HALLOWED GROUND IN THE DESIGN COMMUNITY: THE HOME OF THE LATE JEAN JONGEWARD, NOW OWNED BY AN ACTIVE YOUNG FAMILY. HENSEL REDESIGNED ROOMS THAT FLEX TO TODAY'S LIFESTYLE AND HIGHLIGHT THE OWNERS' ART COLLECTION. ON THE WALLS HERE ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT WORKS BY SCOTT FOLDESI. THE CUSTOM METAL COFFEE TABLE COMPLEMENTS THE FIREPLACE SURROUND.



Steven Hensel revisits the décor
of Jean Jongeward's domicile

TO JEAN, WITH LOVE

WRITTEN BY KATHRYN RENNER PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX HAYDEN



RIGHT: THE BARBARA BARRY DINING ROOM CHAIRS AND TABLE ARE OFTEN SET AS A BUFFET FOR THE WONDERFUL DINING TERRACE BEYOND.

OPPOSITE: SIMPLICITY AND A TOUCH OF NATURE ARE TRADEMARKS OF BOTH HENSEL AND JONGEWARD. THE BRONZE TABLE IS HENSEL'S OWN DESIGN, AND A NOGUCHI TABLE LAMP WITH ITS AMORPHOUS PAPER SHADE ALMOST SEEMS TO FLOAT.

For Steven Hensel, it was déjà vu.

When he was asked to design the décor of a Queen Anne home two years ago, Hensel had flashbacks to 1980. That's when he first knocked on the same front door, his knees quaking.

In 1980, Hensel was calling on Jean Jongeward, the Northwest's premier interior designer—a living legend and rock star in the Seattle design community. Sent to interview her for a local publication, Hensel felt like a minion getting crumbs from the monarch. He chuckles remembering his awkward interview. But over the next 20 years, he developed a collegial friendship with Jongeward that he enjoyed until she died in 2000. Over those years, Hensel himself became a Northwest design star designing residences and second homes for many of Seattle's publicity-shy elite.

On the same doorstep in 2007, Hensel met an active business couple—the newest owners of this 1920s-era jewel, once Jongeward's home. The new owners don't share the glamorous perfectionism of their home's former celebrity resident. They have a fast-paced life revolving around two careers, two teenage daughters, a shy cockapoo, a guinea pig and a busy entertaining calendar. They wanted a sleek, contemporary foil for their art collection and frequent gatherings of friends.

"Livability" was the priority, they say. The house, at Queen Anne's crest, from where downtown and the Space Needle look as if they can be touched from the terrace, was irresistible. Despite chic improvements made by past owners (a tranquil front courtyard and a breezeway from the detached garage masterminded by landscape designer David Pfeiffer), interior rooms seemed formal and inflexible. Hence the call to Hensel. The new owners wouldn't think of moving in until he did his magic.

Design Details

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For resource information, see page 87.



"I LIKE TO THINK JEAN WOULD BE HAPPY WITH THE RESULTS AND THE JOY THAT FILLS HER LEGENDARY ROOMS TODAY."

—INTERIOR DESIGNER STEVEN HENSEL



ABOVE: THE INTERIOR DOORS THAT JONGEWARD DESIGNED HAVE BEEN PRESERVED. HER SETTING HAS MORPHED INTO THIS CONTEMPORARY SEATING AREA. HENSEL USED A LITTLE SOPHISTICATED WHIMSY IN WHAT HE CALLS "POODLE CHAIRS": THE SEATS ARE MICROFIBER, AND BACKS AND FRAMES SPORT SHAG LOOPS.

OPPOSITE: ALFRESCO DINING IS FABULOUS WITH SUCH A VIEW. HENSEL DRAPED THE SETTING FOR AN ALMOST THEATRICAL EFFECT.



ABOVE: THE HOUSE IS APPROACHED THROUGH A TEAK GATE AND COURTYARD. THIS OUTDOOR ROOM ADDED BY PREVIOUS OWNERS IN 2004 WAS DESIGNED BY DAVID PFEIFFER. "AN ARCHITECTURAL GARDEN," HE CALLS IT, WHERE THE SOUND OF WATER FROM THE SMALL WATERFALL WELCOMES VISITORS.

OPPOSITE: THE MASTER BEDROOM IS A QUIET SANCTUARY WITH AN INTIMATE READING AREA AND FIVE-STAR VIEW.

"The house was a shadow of its Jongeward days," Hensel muses. "But there were still hints of her design," he says, pointing to her French-inspired doors created with metal in lieu of glass. When it came to details, Jongeward was a force to be reckoned with, and when possible, Hensel preserved her touch.

Except now, he would unleash his own brand of detail: multiple textures, his custom metal furnishings, subtle drama. He set about making the main rooms multitask stylishly—sometimes formal and other times pull-up-a-chair-and-watch-football casual.

"Steven really listened to how we wanted to live," the current owners say. "And basically that was just to hang out." So Hensel invented many places for hanging out. The main room now works for the family two ways, he explains. The front area around the fireplace invites conversation. ("Those chairs have extra-wide flat upholstered arms so more people can perch there and join in.") The opposite end begs for relaxed TV viewing and casual dining. The two areas overlap, softly separated by a comfortable half-moon-shaped sofa.

And when friends come to hang out, eating areas can accommodate a crowd or a tête-à-tête, with a charming table-for-two in the butler's pantry. Prime square footage—the terrace and awe-inducing view—is punctuated by a dramatic, draped, almost old-Hollywood

outdoor dining setting.

Throughout the home, displaying art left little need for power accessories. Hensel allowed nothing to compete with the intensity of the couple's collection. For large canvas portraits by Johnny O. Brady, he simply affixed them to the wall with whimsical oversized pushpins. (Think the size of pushpin *Hammering Man* would use.)

Both Hensel's and Jongeward's work is shaped around a love of nature and its forms. "But they wanted no indoor house plants, so I brought in nature in other ways," Hensel says. Pillow fabrics have leaf motifs. Twig-shaped floor lamps in the main room offer a hint of arboretum. Dried weeds clipped from a nearby vacant lot and arranged in an urn fill a dining-room corner. Instant, carefree nature—that's the lifestyle here.

On New Year's Eve, food was set up in the dining room, a band belted out the blues near the picture window, chairs were pushed back and guests danced. Sliding doors yawned open to a front-row seat for downtown's fireworks. "It all worked," the owners say. "It was perfect."

Jean Jongeward would be proud. ■

Kirkland based Kathryn Renner writes about beautiful homes and gardens for national and regional publications.

